THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE, MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI JAIRAM RAMESH): (a) There was a change of Government in Thailand in September 2006.

(b) During September 2006 to February 2008, six rounds of Trade Negotiating Committee (TNC) meeting have taken place between India and Thailand. Of these, the TNC meeting on 31/1 to 1/2 2008 took place after another change of Government in Thailand.

(c) to (e) A Framework Agreement for establishing Free Trade Area between India and Thailand was signed on 9th October 2003. Under this Agreement, an Early Harvest Scheme is under implementation and negotiations for an India-Thailand FTA are underway.

Harmful Substance in Chinese Toys

108. SHRIMATI SUSHMA SWARAJ: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the toys made in China carry harmful lead and cadmium;

(b) if so, whether any ban has been put on the import of these toys; and

(c) the efforts being made by Government to make available toys to the children which are cheap and unharmful to health?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE, MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI JAIRAM RAMESH): (a) to (c) Government has received reports regarding recall of toys imported from China into USA due to United States Consumer Product Safety Commission having found excess level of lead paint, violating the US Government Led Paint Standard. There were some other toys/children articles, which were recalled in USA due to design or manufacturing defect which had or could have caused injury. There were cases of toys recalled due to fire/burning hazard.

Toys are classified under Chapter 95 of ITC (HS) Classification of Export and Import Items. Import of toys is free. As per Foreign Trade Policy, all imports are subject to domestic laws, rules, orders, regulations, technical specifications, environmental and safety norms as applicable to domestically produced goods.

As regards the safety requirement for toys, the Bureau of Indian Standards has published the following three standards for safety requirement for toys:—

1. IS 9873 (Part 1) 2001/ISO 8124-1: 2000 Safety requirements for toys: Part 1: Safety aspects related to mechanical and physical properties.
2. IS 9873 (Part 2) 1999/ISO 8124-2:1994 Safety requirements for toys: Part 2: Flammability requirements.
3. IS 9873 ((Part 3) 1999/ISO 8124-3:1997 Safety requirements for toys: Part 3: Migration of certain elements, prescribed maximum acceptable element migration, for Antimony (Sb), Arsenic (As), Barium (Ba), Cadmium (Cd), Chromium (Cr), Lead (Pb), Mercury (Hg) and Selenium (Se) from toy materials.

The aforementioned BIS standards are purely voluntary and neither mandatory on domestic manufacturers nor on imports. Ministry of Micro, Medium and Small Enterprises as set up testing facilities for evaluation of toys at Testing Centres at Mumbai and New Delhi.